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Landmarks Preservation Commission
July 19, 1994; Designation List 259
LP-1884

SEVENTH REGIMENT ARMORY INTERIOR

Lily Fin first floor interior consisting of the Entrance Hall, the main corridor, the grand Stair Hall and staircase leading to the basement and to the second floor, the Veterans' Room, the Library, the Reception Room, the Board of Officers Room (Colonel Emmons Clark Memorial Room), the Colonel's Room, the Adjutant's Room, the Equipment Room, the Outer Committee Room, the Inner Committee Room, the *for J* Signal and Staff Room, and the Drill Room (excluding the storage rooms beneath the gallery, but including the four corner stairs and the passageways to the Lexington Avenue and administration building entrances); the second floor interior consisting of the main corridor, the grand Stair Hall and staircase leading to the third floor, the staircases at the north and south ends of the main corridor leading to the third floor, the Company A (First Company) Room, the Company B (Second Company) Room, the Company C (Third Company) Room, the Company D (Fourth Company) Room, the Company E (Fifth Company) Room and western alcove, the Company F (Sixth Company) Room and western alcove, the Company G (Seventh Company) Room, the Company H (Eighth Company) Room, the Company I (Ninth Company) Room, the Company K (Tenth Company) Room, the Company L (Eleventh Company) Room, and the Company M (Twelfth Company) Room; and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall, ceiling, and floor surfaces, woodwork, cabinets, fireplaces, doors and door hardware, chandeliers, light fixtures, stained-glass window screens, stair railings, radiators, affixed paintings, attached decorative elements, and Drill Room roof trusses; 643 Park Avenue, Manhattan. Built 1877-81; architect Charles W. Clinton; additions and alterations, Robinson & Knust, 1909-11.

Landmark Site: Borough of Manhattan Tax Map Block 1401, Lot 1.

On February 11, 1992, the Landmarks Preservation Commission held a public hearing on the proposed designation as an Interior Landmark of the Seventh Regiment Armory, first floor interior, consisting of the entrance hall, the main corridor, the main stair hall and staircase leading to the second floor, the Veterans' Room, the Library [Music Room], the Ladies' Reception Room (Mary Divver Room), the Board of Officers Room (Colonel Emmons Clark Room), the Colonel's Reception Room, the Adjutant's Room (Gallery), the Equipment ("Saddle") Room (Superintendent's Room), the Outer Committee Room, the Inner Committee Room, the Field and Staff Reception Room, and the Drill Room; the second floor interior, consisting of the main corridor, the main stair hall and staircase leading to the third floor, the staircases at the north and south ends of the main corridor leading to the third floor, the First Company Parlor (Company A Room), the Second Company Parlor (Company B Room), the Third Company Parlor (Company C Room), the Fourth Company Parlor (Company D Room), the Fifth Company Parlor (Company E Room) and western alcove, the Sixth Company Parlor (Company F Room) and western alcove, the Seventh Company Parlor (Company G Room), the Eighth Company Parlor (Company H Room), the Ninth Company Parlor (Company I Room), the Tenth Company Parlor (Company K Room), the Eleventh Company Parlor (Company L Room), and the Twelfth Company Parlor (Company M Room); the fourth floor interior, consisting of the Appleton Mess Hall, the Bar, the Rumpus Room, and the north end stair hall landing (excluding the staircase); and the fixtures and interior components of these spaces, including but not limited to, wall, ceiling, and floor surfaces, woodwork, cabinets, fireplaces, doors, chandeliers, light fixtures, stair railings, attached decorative elements, and Drill Room roof trusses; and the proposed designation of the related Landmark Site (Item No. 1). The hearing had been duly advertised in accordance with the provisions of law. Thirty-seven

witnesses spoke in favor of designation, including Col. John L. Jones, senior officer at the Seventh Regiment Armory; Brig. Gen. Charles E. Hangley, representing the Veterans of the Seventh Regiment; the Seventh Regiment Fund, and Friends of the Seventh Regiment; Col. David J. Ramsay (retired), New York Chapter of the Association of the United States Army; Lt. Col. Arnold Albert, Veterans Corps of Artillery; Lisa Weilbacker, curator of the armory and executive director of the Board of Friends of the Seventh Regiment Armory; Nina Gray, former decorative arts curator at The New York Historical Society; representatives of many organizations which regularly use the building; and representatives of the Society for Industrial Archaeology, the American Society of Interior Designers, the Junior League of the City of New York, Friends of the Upper East Side Historic Districts, and Municipal Art Society. Read into the record were several letters written in favor of designation, including statements by Dianne H. Pilgrim and David R. McFadden, director and curator of decorative arts (respectively) of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum; Kevin Stayton, curator of decorative art at the Brooklyn Museum; Catherine Hoover Voorsanger, assistant curator of American decorative arts at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Robert J. Kapsch, chief, Historic American Building Survey/Historic American Engineering Record; the Metropolitan Chapter of the Victorian Society in America; and the New York Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians. No witnesses spoke in opposition to designation. One witness expressed concern over the impact of designation on future changes to the site. In addition, the Commission received numerous letters and other forms of correspondence in favor of designation, including a resolution by Community Board 8 and a letter from the New York Landmarks Conservancy.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary

The Seventh Regiment Armory, with its historically and architecturally significant interior spaces, was privately built in 1877-81 for the prestigious, elite Seventh Regiment, under the leadership of Col. Emmons Clark, to the designs of architect Charles W. Clinton, a veteran of Co. K of the regiment. A volunteer militia unit often referred to as the "Silk Stocking Regiment" due to its ties to socially prominent New York families, the Seventh Regiment had an illustrious military history dating from 1806 and was the first to adopt the term "national guard." The palatial Seventh Regiment Armory, one of the finest and most costly American armories of the nineteenth century, had national influence in establishing the armory as a distinct building type, in terms of both functional design and architectural imagery. Col. Clark credited architect Clinton for "the architectural beauty of the building, exterior and interior, and for the complete construction and finish of every part of the immense structure." In addition, to decorate and furnish the interiors in 1879-81, the regiment chose some of the most prominent American design and interior decoration firms of the day, including Associated Artists, Herter Brothers, Pottier & Stymus, Kimbel & Cabus, Alexander Roux & Co., and George C. Flint & Co., resulting in the creation of a series of lavish late-Victorian interiors. Aside from its military and police function, the Seventh Regiment

served largely as a social club for its members, and the interiors of the armory reflect this.

The regimental rooms on the first floor were utilized for officers and for formal public, ceremonial, and reception purposes. The Veterans' Room and Library, featuring a profusion of ornament and widely considered to be among the most significant and beautiful surviving interiors of the American Aesthetic Movement, were designed and decorated by Associated Artists (Louis C. Tiffany & Co.) with Stanford White. Herter Brothers decorated the Reception Room (with woodwork by Alexander Roux & Co.), the Board of Officers Room, and the Colonel's Room, executing the woodwork in the latter two; these rooms are very rare survivals among Herter Brothers interiors. The extant wall and ceiling decoration in the Board of Officers Room, mostly dating from its "restoration" in 1932 as a memorial to Col. Emmons Clark, is an early instance of the historic preservation of a significant nineteenth-century American interior. Pottier & Stymus was responsible for the decoration of the Field and Staff Room. The corridors, the Entrance Hall, and the grand central Stair Hall, were executed by the firm of George C. Flint & Co. The rooms on the second floor, for the individual companies of the regiment (with each responsible for fitting up its own room), were used as combination club/locker rooms. The design firms commissioned

by the companies in 1879-80 included three that worked on regimental rooms. Despite the commonalities of function and overall design scheme, each of the company rooms has a distinctive, individual decorative character. Herter Brothers designed those for Companies C and H; Pottier & Stymus was responsible for those for Companies D, E, G, and I; and architect Sidney V. Stratton, a company member, designed the Company K Room, which was executed by Kimbel & Cabus and is a rare surviving intact interior in the Queen Anne style. Of the three company rooms (Companies A, B and F) for which the decorating firms are unattributed, Flint & Co. and Roux & Co. were among the firms that decorated rooms on this floor, and it is known that architect Albert Wagner designed the Company B Room.

The Drill Room, at approximately 200 by 300 feet one of the largest unobstructed interiors in New York City upon its completion, is significant in the history of American engineering. It has the oldest extant "balloon shed" (a barrel vaulted roof supported on visible arch trusses or ribs) in America, and is considered one of the first buildings in the United States not associated with a railroad to incorporate this structural system, which was often used in railroad stations. The room features eleven elliptical wrought-iron arches, designed by consulting engineer Charles Macdonald (president of the Delaware Bridge Company, a subsidiary of the important iron-and-steel-producing Cooper, Hewitt & Co.); also collaborating with Charles Clinton on the design of the room was consulting architect Robert G. Hatfield. Built primarily for regimental maneuvers, the Drill Room also has accommodated numerous events and large gatherings throughout its history.

Throughout the period between 1896 and 1913, a number of substantial changes occurred in the armory, including its electrification, the installation of a new steam heating system, the addition of two floors and interior re-arrangement, and a new Drill Room gallery. New wrought-iron electric chandeliers and other fixtures by Frank S. Brady/J.L. Gaumer & Co., of Philadelphia, were installed in the corridors, most regimental rooms, and many company rooms. Alterations were made to the regimental and company rooms, mainly the redesign of upper wall and ceiling surfaces; changes in taste

account for some of the changes, but undoubtedly others were the result of the physical disruptions of the original decor and the need for repair. Companies still vied with each other to have the most beautiful room, but certain companies (such as Co. K) maintained a strong tradition and sense of history by altering their rooms very little. Newly created and decorated rooms in 1909-13 included the Inner and Outer Committee, Adjutant's, and Equipment Rooms on the first floor, and the Company L and Company M Rooms on the second floor for two new federally-mandated units. The Company L Room was decorated in a neo-Classical style, while the Company M Room received a Tudor Revival treatment.

As an ensemble, the regimental and company rooms of the Seventh Regiment Armory are a nationally important collection of high-style interiors, designed to reflect the late-Victorian taste of the late 1870s and early 1880s, with decorative sensibilities of the Aesthetic Movement, and woodwork mostly in the Renaissance Revival style. The interiors of the Armory are on a scale with and display an elegance and quality usually found only in the interiors of private clubs and the most ornate residences, few of which survive in New York City from this period. These rooms contain an abundance of woodwork and cabinetry, particularly the company rooms, and as a whole they exhibit an unusual degree of intactness, despite their usage by the national guard and the exigencies for changes. The alterations to these rooms made during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries exhibit either change in contemporary taste or the skillful adaptation to existing decor. These rooms, with the newly created rooms of 1909-13, the corridors, and the Stair Hall, also contain a large and important collection of both original gas and early electric chandeliers and other lighting fixtures. Together with the Drill Room, highly significant for its engineering in the creation of one of the largest unobstructed spaces in New

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The National Guard and Armories

The Seventh Regiment Armory was built in 1877-81 for the prestigious, elite Seventh Regiment, to the designs of architect Charles W. Clinton, a veteran of Co. K of the regiment. The first to adopt the term "national guard," the Regiment was a volunteer militia unit of the National Guard of the State of New York, long the largest and most active state militia in the country. The tradition of volunteer state militias remained strong in America from the Revolution through the nineteenth century; in 1792 Congress passed an act that established uniform standards for the various state militias. While the volunteer militia provided a large portion of the fighting forces in the nineteenth century, the readiness of the militia for warfare and its relationship to the standing army were called into question during the Civil War (at which time the name "national guard" came into more common usage). The New York Armory Law of 1862 attempted to address these issues by spurring the creation of regiments and armories, but met with little success in the aftermath of the war. With changes in American (and, in particular, New York) society in the second half of the nineteenth century -- increasing industrialization, urbanization, labor union activity, and immigration -- the role of the National Guard was affected, leading to its resurgence. In the midst of a severe economic depression that began in 1873, the first nationwide general strike over working conditions occurred after a railroad strike in 1877; the National Guard was called to support police and federal troops against strikers and their supporters in dozens of American cities. Although units had been called previously to quell civil unrest, after 1877 the role of the National Guard was largely to protect the property interests of the business class and to control urban workers in strikes and "riots," and a wave of armory building began nationally. The Seventh Regiment Armory was the vanguard of

spaces. The Seventh Regiment built the first regimental armory in New York City. The Italianate three-story, cast-iron-fronted Tompkins Market Armory (1855-60, James Bogardus and Col. Marshall Lefferts, Third Avenue and 6th Street, demolished),² was the result of a collaboration between the regiment and the local butchers, in which a drill hall and regimental and company rooms (many of which were fitted up after plans by Charles W. Clinton) were placed above a public market. The Seventh Regiment found this armory inadequate as early as 1866, and began to think about a location closer to its affluent members uptown and a design which featured a drill room on the ground floor; the Tompkins Market Armory was damaged by fire in 1874.

The new Seventh Regiment Armory, one of the finest and most costly American armories of the nineteenth century, had national influence in establishing the armory as a distinct building type, in terms of both functional design and architectural imagery. Modelled in plan after such nineteenth-century railroad stations as the first Grand Central Depot, the Seventh Regiment Armory features an administrative "headhouse" building (originally three stories) facing Park Avenue, connected to a drill shed (occupying the rest of the block to Lexington Avenue) which utilizes iron trusses to span a large space. The "medieval" appearance of the administration building, reminiscent of a fortress or castle with a central tower, helped to signify the armory as a distinct building type, connoted its military function as well as the concepts of power and control, and assisted functionally in the military defense of the building if necessary. Most armories would adopt such fortress features as turrets, towers, crenellated parapets, slit windows, impenetrable doors, window grilles, etc., which could be used by troops with guns or to thwart uninvited entry. The Seventh Regiment Armory stimulated units in New York and elsewhere to build their own armories. In 1884 the New York State Legislature created an Armory Board in New York City, which was charged with making the arrangements to condemn land, to allocate funds, and to authorize and oversee the construction, furnishing, and maintenance of armories for National Guard units in the city. The luxurious, clublike atmosphere of the Seventh Regiment Armory was the architectural aspiration (usually unobtainable) of many a guard unit that had constant trouble recruiting and retaining members.

that way. The term "armory" refers to an American building type that developed in the nineteenth century to house volunteer state militias, providing space for arms, supplies, storage, and administrative and social functions. Aside from their military and police function, units of the National Guard were in large part social organizations; some, especially the Seventh Regiment, drew members from the social elite, while many others recruited primarily from local ethnic groups. The earliest quarters for New York militia units were often inadequate rented

The Seventh Regiment

The Seventh Regiment, often referred to as the "Silk Stocking Regiment" due to its ties to socially prominent New York families, had an illustrious military history and was considered to be the most prestigious American military group of the nineteenth century. The regiment traces its lineage to four companies organized in 1806 by New York merchants in response to the British practice of boarding American ships to search for British sailors. Attached to the artillery Eleventh Regiment as the Second Battalion in 1812, it was the first in the New York State Militia to volunteer for service in the War of 1812. The Second Battalion, acting upon its desire to become an infantry unit, formed a separate organization in 1824 and adopted the name "National Guards" after members of one of its companies served as honor guard for the Marquis de Lafayette (*Garde Nationale* commander) on his visit to New York that year. The national guard designation was used exclusively by this unit (the final "s" was dropped in 1832) until New York State adopted it for the entire state militia in 1862; it was not used nationally until later. The National Guards expanded to six companies in 1825 and to ten in 1826, when it reached regiment status and became the Twenty-seventh Regiment, Artillery; it was re-designated the Seventh Regiment in 1847. After its service in quelling civil disturbances from the Election Riot (1834) through the Astor Place Riot (1849), as well as in firefighting, the regiment achieved national renown and was esteemed enough by conservative politicians and city fathers for it to be the recipient of the city's first regimental armory, the Tompkins Market Armory (previously each company had separate quarters and the regiment assembled outdoors or at the Arsenal). After President Lincoln's call for volunteers on April 15, 1861, the regiment, under the command of Col. Marshall Lefferts, responded that same day and was one of the first units to reach Washington and enter Union service (many of its merchant and business leader members suffered great financial loss in absenting themselves from New York). The regiment served several times during the war, and some 500 members served individually; in addition, the Seventh was called back to New York in 1863 to assist in suppressing the Draft Riots.

In June 1864, Col. Emmons Clark became commander of the Seventh Regiment, serving in that capacity until 1889. Clark (1827-1905) was also the Secretary of the New York Board of Health from

1866 to 1901. It was largely due to his efforts that the new Seventh Regiment Armory became an actuality. The regiment, after abandoning an effort to obtain Reservoir Square on West 42nd Street, negotiated the lease in 1874 for a city-owned full-block site, formerly Hamilton Square, at Fourth (Park) Avenue and East 66th Street. In May 1874, a committee was set up to acquire "plans and estimates from the best architects of this City";³ by October, veteran Charles Clinton had prepared a set of plans. He later executed preliminary designs [not built] for a two-story administration building (with a mansarded partial third story) and large drill room, and was officially retained as architect in August 1875. The Common Council had just authorized a \$350,000 appropriation for construction of the armory, but never set a tax levy to raise the money, and there was opposition on the Board of Estimate and elsewhere. Moreover, New York City in the 1870s was both in the midst of a severe economic depression and recovering from the recent construction scandals of the "Boss" William M. Tweed ring, and the regiment was finally hesitant, as an elite body in this political climate, to insist that the city construct its building (only fifteen years after the Tompkins Market Armory). In January 1876, after recognizing the city's financial plight and the "general depression in business," and stating that it would be "inexpedient and injudicious"⁴ to use city funds, the Officers resolved to raise the money by private subscription; the Seventh Regiment Armory was the only armory thus privately constructed and owned. Many of the wealthiest and most prominent New Yorkers (as well as businesses, regiment members and veterans) responded with contributions to the "New Armory Fund," and by 1881 over \$237,000 was raised in this manner, quite an impressive feat for the time. The regiment, in its lavish, palatial new armory of 1877-81, reached the pinnacle of prestige, and was constantly in demand for its services, both military and police as well as ceremonial.

Emmons Clark was succeeded by Col. Daniel Appleton, another long-term commander, from 1889 to 1916; Appleton (1852-1929), a partner in the publishing firm of D. Appleton & Co. and a former captain of Co. F, oversaw the regiment's expansion to twelve companies, substantive military organizational and equipment changes, and the first major building systems changes, additions and alterations of the Seventh Regiment Armory in 1896-

1913, as well as the end of its era of riot duty (the last was the Croton Dam Riot of 1900). The Seventh was re-designated the Seventh Infantry Regiment in 1899, was called into federal service in 1917, ending the regiment's autonomy, and during World War I served as the 107th Infantry, U.S. Army, assigned to the 27th Division; some 2000 members and veterans of the regiment were commissioned officers and 580 members lost their lives. A Depot Battalion, assigned to the armory during the war, was merged with the overseas veterans upon their return in 1919; the regiment was entirely federalized in 1922, and began to lose its elite composition. The 107th Infantry became the 207th Coast Artillery in 1940,

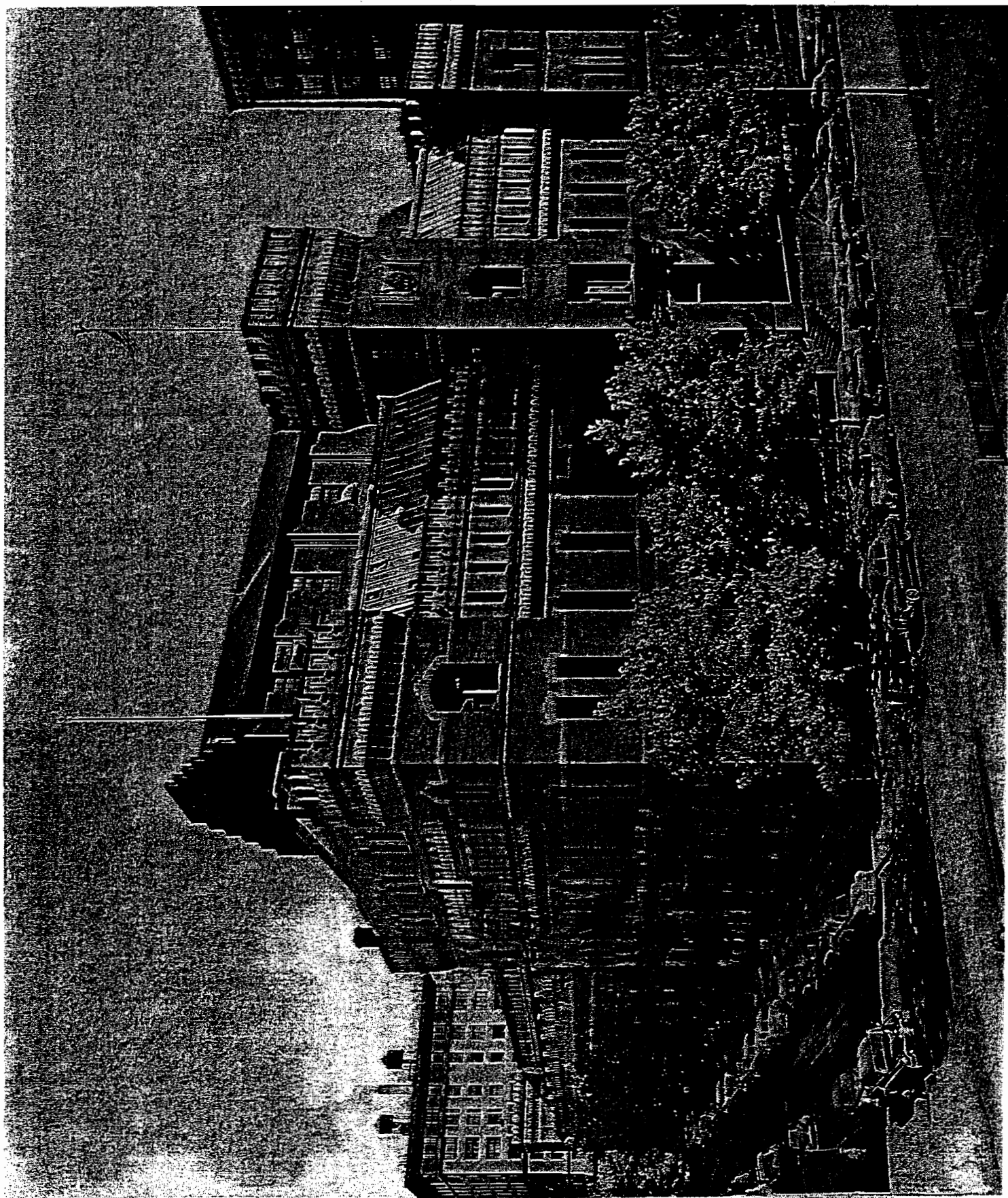
which during World War II served with four separate units; after the war, it was again reorganized as the 107th Infantry, and was assigned to the 42nd Division in 1957. In 1952 the property of the regiment was transferred to the Seventh Regiment Fund. After a reorganization of National Guard units in 1968, the regiment became the First Battalion, 42nd Infantry Division, New York National Guard; it is currently designated the Department of Army Headquarters 107th Support Group, New York Army National Guard. Veterans of these successor units are still known as "Veterans of the Seventh Regiment" and maintain headquarters at the armory.

The Seventh Regiment Armory

The revised plans and specifications for the new armory, as prepared by Charles Clinton (with general planning input from Col. Emmons Clark) by January 1876, were approved by the Board of Officers in May; the regiment was in the midst of the subscription drive for funds, which had slowed down drastically by the end of the year. Clinton had reduced the amount of granite proposed for the exterior to trim only, greatly decreasing the cost. A Building Committee was organized in June, and contracts were let for excavation and foundation work by April 1877; the first payments were made in July 1877, the same month as the start of the Railroad Strike. Although New York escaped the turmoil seen in other cities, the regiment's role in keeping order spurred another influx of money to the New Armory Fund, and cornerstone laying ceremonies were held in October 1877, with a keynote speech by Secretary of State William E. Evarts. As the administration building and Drill Room were under construction and funds were running out, the regiment petitioned the Legislature for a loan in January 1879, which was authorized and issued in March-April in the form of \$150,000 in bonds assigned against the site and building as security; the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund extended the lease of the site in perpetuity for as long as the regiment "shall exist and act as a military organization"⁵ and the Legislature authorized an appropriation, in lieu of rental, in which the regiment received \$15,000 a year (in order to redeem the bonds and interest by 1894). By the fall of 1879 the building was entirely enclosed, heated, and lit by gas, the floors were laid and the main staircase was constructed, and virtually everything but decor was under contract. In order to

raise further monies to complete construction and for the decoration and furnishing of the interiors, the regiment decided to hold a fair.

The three-week New Armory Fair, opened by President Rutherford B. Hayes on November 17, 1879, was a phenomenal success, attended by thousands who took the opportunity to view the incomplete administration building and nearly completed Drill Room, and raised a clear \$140,550. After construction was mostly completed and the furnishing was well under way, the Seventh Regiment ceremonially marched from the old Tompkins Market Armory, up Fifth Avenue, to the Seventh Regiment Armory on April 26, 1880, to take possession of its building. The total cost of the armory in 1881 (including furniture and fixtures) was about \$605,000, of which \$589,440 was provided by the New Armory Fund.⁶ To questions about the extravagance of the furnishing of the armory, Col. Clark replied, as reported in the *New York Tribune* (Sept. 25, 1880), that the regiment had raised more than expected at the Fair and "it was thought that nothing better could be done with it than to accomplish the perfection of the armory." Two of the first large events scheduled to show off the building and to thank the patrons of the regiment were Subscribers' Day of September 1880 (attended by some 40,000, including an estimated 25,000 inside at 9:00 p.m., the peak time) and the New Armory Inauguration Ball of December 1880, one of the most fashionable social events of the era. The first drills were held in the Drill Room in October 1880.



Seventh Regiment Armory Built 1877-81; architect Charles W. Clinton; additions 1909-11, 1928-29
Photo: Albert L. Waks (c. 1955)

The Interiors of the Seventh Regiment Armory

Col. Emmons Clark credited architect Charles Clinton's "genius and admirable artistic taste" as responsible for "the architectural beauty of the building, exterior and interior, and for the complete construction and finish of every part of the immense structure."⁷ For the woodwork, decoration, and furnishing of its rooms in 1879-81, the regiment chose some of the most prominent American design and interior decoration firms of the day to create a series of lavish late-Victorian interiors, most with Aesthetic Movement decoration and Renaissance Revival style woodwork. The regimental rooms on the first floor were largely for officers and for formal public, ceremonial, and reception purposes, while those on the second floor were for the individual companies of the regiment and were used as combination club/locker rooms. Aside from its military function, the Seventh Regiment, as an elite volunteer militia, served largely as a social club for its members, and the interiors of the armory reflect this. As noted by a member, writing to the *Seventh Regiment Gazette* in February 1890:

it is as much to its social attractions as to its military renown that the regiment owes its popularity among a class of young men who are desirable as recruits. ...the regiment, the veterans and the generous citizens who subscribed the vast amount required to build the Armory, did so with the idea it was to be a club house as well as an Armory.⁸

The Seventh Regiment provided its members with a vast social and cultural network, which in the armory alone included such activities as drills, shooting, swimming, dining, balls, theatrical and other entertainments, and galas. The armory was only in use, however, during the drill season which lasted from October to April; in summer there were regimental encampments outside New York. The facilities and activities were considered essential to the prestige and traditions of the Seventh Regiment, particularly considering the social element from which it drew its volunteers, and these helped attract and retain those recruits.

The interior decoration and furnishing of the armory were widely covered by the general daily newspapers, as well as more specialized journals, such as *The Decorator and Furnisher*. Typical were comments such as those by the *New York Times* in April 1880 that

the painting and frescoing is being done in a style only to be seen in the most luxurious private residences of the City; in fact this remark applies to all the appointments of these rooms so far as they now appear.⁹

Regimental Rooms, Stair Hall and Corridors

In August 1879, the Building Committee in charge of construction of the armory expressed reservations about its authority to fit up the regimental rooms (Library, and Reception, Board of Officers, Colonel's, and Field and Staff Rooms on the first floor, and Adjutant's and Non-commissioned Staff Rooms on the second floor), so the Board of Officers set up a new Committee on Interior Work under Maj. George Moore Smith (which included Col. Clark and Capt. Appleton), with power to procure designs and contract for furniture, fixtures, and decoration [apparently there was already a sub-committee in place, as indicated in a letter earlier in August from Col. Clark, in which he requested that Building Committee members stop at the office of Edward Kemp to "examine the plans which have been offered to the Committee by several of the leading houses of this city"].¹⁰ At its meeting in October, the Board heard a report of the new committee, examined plans for the rooms, and after "considerable discussion"¹¹ adopted recommendations on the choice of woods for each room; Smith "presented plans from the Architect [Clinton] for the several rooms"¹² (except the Library) in November, which were approved, and the committee was directed to secure completed plans and estimates. At the Board's January 1880 meeting, the committee reported a delay in the estimates due to Clinton's ill health, so the committee was authorized to "let the contracts for fitting up and furnishing said rooms"¹³ at an amount not to exceed that in the New Armory and Regimental Funds. Regimental records are sketchy about the contracting of the Library, but it seems to have been handled along with the adjacent Veterans' Room (although paid through separate accounts), which was under the control of the Veterans' Association and paid for with \$20,000 from the New Armory Fund.

Some of the most prominent American design and interior decoration firms of the day, all located in New York City, were hired. The corridors, which have extensive wainscot and large wooden surrounds and doors, as well as the grand central Stair Hall, were executed by the firm of George C. Flint & Co.,

with gas lighting fixtures, originally bronzed brass, by Mitchell, Vance & Co. (in 1897 these spaces received elaborate new wrought-iron electric chandeliers and wall bracket fixtures by Frank S. Brady/J.L. Gaumer & Co.). The Veterans' Room and Library, featuring a profusion of stenciling, ironwork, woodwork, and other decoration, and widely considered to be among the most significant and beautiful surviving interiors of the American Aesthetic Movement, were designed and decorated by Associated Artists (Louis C. Tiffany & Co.) with architect Stanford White. Herter Brothers decorated the Reception Room (the woodwork was executed by Alexander Roux & Co.), the Board of Officers Room, and the Colonel's Room, executing the woodwork in the latter two; these rooms are very rare survivals among Herter Brothers interiors. The extant wall and ceiling decoration in the Board of Officers Room mostly dates from a re-painting in 1932. Pottier & Stymus was responsible for the decoration of the Field and Staff Room. Other than the extensive Aesthetic Movement stenciled decoration found originally on the ceiling and wall surfaces, these regimental rooms are largely intact (most of them also received elaborate electric chandeliers and lighting fixtures in 1897), and display extensive woodwork, all in woods which vary from room to room, including wainscot, some cabinetry, prominent mantels and overmantels over decorative fireplaces, and massive window and door surrounds the latter with double sliding doors. Stenciled decoration survives only in the Veterans' and Board of Officers Rooms (though it has been re-painted); in the Library the patterned plaster ceiling decoration survives. In addition, the Stair Hall and Board of Officers and Colonel's Rooms have affixed portraits painted on canvas by noted artists.

Company Rooms

Each of the ten original companies of the regiment was responsible for fitting up its own room on the second floor of the Armory. The Board of Officers in March 1879 requested that each company set up a committee to deal with interior decoration and furnishing, that also would dispose of the furniture and fixtures of the Tompkins Market Armory; Col. Clark cautioned against haste and for "mature consideration" as it was "desirable that each company room should be entirely satisfactory to those who occupy it."¹⁴ Each company was also requested to inform Clark if its ceiling was not to be plastered by the armory's general plasterer, and he further suggested that each company select a plan, write detailed specifications, invite estimates from

several firms, and make a selection based on the lowest bid (around \$5000) to avoid "extravagance."¹⁵ In June, after realizing that Co. K had already contracted for its room, the board requested that no room be fully fitted up prior to the New Armory Fair in November (and thus jeopardize donations). Clark wrote to each company captain in August that all rooms would receive uniform locks and doorknobs by Yale Lock Mfg. Co. and that

*under the contract for gas fittings and fixtures a chandelier and the necessary side brackets will be furnished to each company room and will be in position by the 1st of November. When the New Armory is permanently occupied by the Regiment the gas fixtures in the company rooms can be arranged by the several companies to suit the taste and wishes of their members.*¹⁶

In 1879-80 all of the companies commissioned leading New York design firms, including three of the same ones that worked on regimental rooms. As summarized by Col. Clark:

*The companies had special committees in charge of the work upon their respective rooms, and there was considerable quiet rivalry to secure the most artistic designs and the best mechanical execution. As the appropriation to each company for this purpose from the receipts of the fair and from the regimental fund was six thousand dollars, the means were not wanting to complete the company rooms in the most satisfactory manner.*¹⁷

The companies altogether spent in excess of an additional \$12,000 on room decoration, bringing the total for the ten company rooms to around \$72,000.¹⁸ The company rooms, like most of the regimental rooms, were decorated with woodwork in the Renaissance Revival style (as characterized by Clark, "the spirit of all the company rooms [A to I]... is more or less of the Italian Renaissance"),¹⁹ some with neo-Grec detailing, and all had Aesthetic Movement ceiling and/or wall decoration. Despite the commonalities of function and overall design scheme, each of the company rooms has a distinctive, individual decorative character.

Research to date has identified the interior decoration firms that executed seven of the ten rooms: Herter Brothers decorated those for Companies C and H; Pottier & Stymus was

responsible for those for Companies D, E, G, and I (Company E also consulted with architect George W. DaCunha); and architect Sidney V. Stratton, a company member, designed the Company K Room which was executed by Kimbel & Cabus and is a rare surviving intact interior in the Queen Anne style. Of the three company rooms (Companies A, B and F) for which the decorating firms are unattributed, the *New York Times* in 1880 cited George C. Flint & Co. and Alexander Roux & Co. among the firms that decorated rooms on this floor,²⁰ and it is known that German-American architect Albert Wagner designed the Company B Room.²¹ The company rooms feature extensive, largely original, woodwork, executed in different varieties of wood, including much locker cabinetry, mantels and overmantels, and some original paneled ceilings. The design of the room usually balanced a fireplace on one side with a piano alcove (with surround similar to the overmantel) on the opposite side. The rooms are further embellished by many other features, dating largely from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, such as fireplaces (the *New York Herald* in September 1880 remarked that "the fireplaces in most of them are marvels of ingenious design and faultless execution"),²² mirrors, ornate gas and electric chandeliers and wall bracket fixtures, ironwork, cast-iron radiators, frosted- or stained-glass window screens and transoms, decorative upper wall and ceiling treatments in a variety of materials, ornamental panels, commemorative memorial tablets, clocks, shields, cartouches, armor, decorative hardware, and parquet floors.

Later Alterations and New Rooms

By 1886 the Seventh Regiment realized the burden of maintaining such an expensive property and applied to the city's Department of Public Works for appropriations for repairs and improvements. After a court decision mandated that the city was liable for repairs, the Legislature amended the law of 1879 in 1893, providing that, after the armory bonds were redeemed in 1894, the regiment was to receive an annual appropriation of \$8000, and the lease and property were re-assigned to the Field Officers of the Seventh Regiment. Of those improvements made with such funds, the armory's Trustees, in a communication with the Board of Estimate in January 1896, stated that

it has been the aim of the Trustees in making improvements, to have the work well

Drill Room

The Drill Room, at approximately 200 by 300 feet one of the largest unobstructed interiors in New York City upon its completion, is significant in the history of American engineering. It is considered to have the oldest extant "balloon shed" (a barrel vaulted roof supported on visible arch trusses or ribs) in America, and is also thought to have been one of the first buildings in the United States not associated with a railroad to incorporate this structural system, which was often used in railroad stations, particularly after its first major American usage in the first Grand Central Depot (1869-71). The room features eleven elliptical wrought-iron arches, each spanning over 187 feet, which support the wood plank roof and an upper roof extension (which is supported on additional trusses and has clerestory windows). The Drill Room was the collaboration of Charles Clinton, with consulting architect Robert G. Hatfield and consulting engineer Charles Macdonald. Macdonald, the president of the Delaware Bridge Company, a subsidiary of the important iron-and-steel-producing Cooper, Hewitt & Co., designed the iron trusswork. The ironwork was supplied by Passaic Rolling Mill Co., with Alfred R. Whitney as contractor. Artist Jasper F. Cropsey was consultant for the initial effulgent painted decoration of this room (although his work has since been covered over). Built primarily for regimental maneuvers, the large Drill Room has also accommodated numerous events and large gatherings throughout its history.

*performed and in harmony with the character of other work in the armory, always observing that the designs will not call for expenditures unnecessarily extravagant.*²³

For the first major expenditure since the armory's construction, the regiment applied to the New York Armory Board in April 1896 for "wiring, furnishing fixtures and connections for lighting the armory by electricity"²⁴ (a contract was awarded to general contractor J.F. Buchanan & Co., of Philadelphia, in April 1897) and contacted the Edison Electrical Illuminating Co. about connecting the armory with its system. New wrought-iron electric chandeliers and other fixtures by Frank S. Brady/J.L. Gaumer & Co., of Philadelphia, were installed in the corridors,

most regimental rooms and many company rooms for about \$25,000. The massive task of the electrification of the armory, one of the largest such jobs ever seen in New York City, caused quite a bit of disruption throughout the armory in 1897. The Trustees expressed worries in July that the armory's "several parts are being seriously injured";²⁵ a Co. C member remarked in August that the armory was "in a most dilapidated condition, owing to the work . . . now in progress . . . the floors and wainscoting are torn out . . . the Veterans' room presents a most forlorn appearance . . . ,"²⁶ and Col. Daniel Appleton fretted in September that "I am very much concerned about the work now going on at the Armory, and as usual with city contractors, they have been very unaccommodating. . . ."²⁷ In January 1898, a member commented that

*the entire armory is once again freed for a little while, in any event, from the incubus of dirt and inconvenience that recent alterations have entailed. Whatever the future may have in store in way of further improvement... we take heart in believing the siege will be no worse than the one just terminated. That the armory is better for the new method of lighting, we think will be generally conceded.... it is creditable to Mr. Brady's skill as a designer and draughtsman that his work has given such general satisfaction.*²⁸

And Co. A revelled in the fact that they now had "light, and good light . . . and with a minimum heat, instead of the fiery furnace of old. . . ."²⁹

The peace did not last for long at the armory, however. In January 1901, the Trustees reported that the steam pipe heating system (buried in the walls) was in "deplorable condition"³⁰ and was leaking. The recommendation was made to abandon the old system for the installation of a new exposed pipe system, even if that meant that pipes would pass through all of the rooms and that some lockers might be sacrificed in company rooms. The Armory Board awarded a \$10,500 contract to James Curran Mfg. Co. in August 1902 for the steam heating. The *Seventh Regiment Gazette* applauded the forthcoming improvement, as the old system "is not only out of date, but is totally inadequate to the needs of such a big building."³¹ Further heating alterations were made by Baker, Smith & Co. according to a \$4546 contract awarded by the Armory Board in June 1909. Cast-iron radiators still exist in the armory from both the Curran and Baker, Smith installations.

After federal legislation mandated that all National Guard units consist of twelve companies, the Seventh Regiment applied to the Armory Board in April 1909 for a \$200,000 appropriation for the first major alteration and expansion of the armory; a nearly \$172,000 contract was awarded to contractors Kelly & Kelly in June for the majority of the work. Plans were devised by architects [Floyd L.] Robinson & [Leo F.] Knust, and it was Knust, a sergeant of Co. E, who was credited with having "planned and urged the importance of the work that is now being done, and who also was largely responsible for securing the necessary appropriation from the city,"³² according to the *Seventh Regiment Gazette*. The interior changes of 1909-11, which roughly doubled the amount of working floor space, included the insertion of mezzanine levels on the eastern side of the first and second floors (without "disturbance" of "the decoration and fittings of the more important rooms"),³³ the raising of the third floor to a full story and the addition of a fourth floor, and installation of new stairs at both ends of the second-story corridors; newly created and decorated rooms included the Inner and Outer Committee, Adjutant's, and Equipment Rooms on the first floor, and the Company L and Company M Rooms on the second floor for the two additional units. The Company L Room was decorated in a neo-Classical style, while the Company M Room received a Tudor Revival treatment. On the exterior of the armory's administration building, the upper portion of the central tower was removed, crenellation was added, and certain features were remodeled "to harmonize with the new work in an effort to give each facade an appearance of greater strength and the building as a whole the appearance of greater bulk."³⁴ Floyd L. Robinson filed plans in October 1911 for further alterations, which entailed a new continuous gallery for increased seating in the Drill Room, and certain corresponding alterations of the exterior Lexington Avenue and side facades, and the installation of a new high-pressure water system; a \$236,000 contract was awarded by the Armory Board for this work to contractor Charles Meads & Co., and the work was performed in 1912-13.

Throughout this period of substantial changes in the armory (1896-1913), alterations were made to the regimental and company rooms, mainly the redesign of upper wall and ceiling surfaces, as well as the change to electric fixtures. Changes in taste account for some of the changes, but undoubtedly others were the result of the physical disruptions of the original decor and the need for repair. Companies still vied with each other to have the most beautiful room, but

certain companies (such as Co. K) maintained a strong tradition and sense of history by altering their rooms very little. Co. C expressed its sentiments about its Herter Brothers room in 1894:

*whatever remedial change is necessary in the Company quarters it must be of such a nature as will not materially interfere with the present plan, scope and decoration of the room. The salient points in each of the particulars have been maintained with but little alteration since the Company took possession. Whatever change has been made in the original design, has been in the line of improvement and only after careful consultation with men of recognized skill and ability.*³⁵

Information is scarce on which firms performed the alteration work in the company rooms, and accounts are often vague about the exact nature of the "redecorating" or "remodelling" that occurred — whether it entailed furniture and more ephemeral material only, or whether it constituted more substantial changes to the attached decor, such as woodwork and ceilings. Examples of documented company room alterations include the coffered ceiling in the Company A Room (c. 1897); the revisions in decor of the Company B Room by Tiffany Studios (1906); the Adamesque ornament of the Company D Room (1894-95); the Tudor Revival ceiling of the Company E Room (1892); the Colonial Revival upper wall treatment of the Company G Room by Charles A. Hutchings (1894); extensive woodwork alterations in the Company H Room (c. 1887-1904);

and the balcony with Art Nouveau ironwork in the Company I Room (1890). After World War I, many of the companies installed memorials to their fallen comrades.

In 1928-29, the addition of a fifth floor to the armory for a new gymnasium freed the fourth floor for the creation of new dining and social spaces [not part of this designation], which included the Daniel Appleton Memorial Mess Hall, intended as the Seventh Regiment's memorial to its late, beloved long-time commander, decorated in 1930-31 by Irving & Casson/A.H. Davenport, the successor to two very important Boston design firms. The armory received monies for construction and rehabilitation from the Works Progress Administration in the 1930s. Irving & Casson/A.H. Davenport was retained throughout the 1930s and '40s for numerous projects in the armory, including the alterations of the Colonel's Room (1932-47) and probably the Field and Staff Room (1933). The firm was responsible for the restoration of the Herter Brothers' Board of Officers Room in 1932, in an early instance of the historic preservation of a significant nineteenth-century American interior, when the regiment dedicated it as a memorial to Col. Emmons Clark, the instigator of the building of the armory.

Since federalization of the National Guard, the company rooms and some of the regimental rooms have been used as offices. Aside from the armory's accessibility to the public through its fourth-floor restaurant and many events in the Drill Room (such as antiques shows), the interiors are open to the public through scheduled and reserved tours.

Significance of the Seventh Regiment Interiors

The Seventh Regiment Armory interiors were initially executed during the period of the rise of the "interior decorator" as a distinct profession in the late 1870s. New York City had become the American center of "fine cabinetmaking" during the 1850s, and the larger furniture manufacturers and dealers began to expand their activities to include woodwork, upholstery, decorations, fabrics, and accessories, in order to provide coordinated "artistic" interiors. Consequently, New York City developed the most highly regarded American interior decoration firms of the day. These firms worked at times directly to the design of the architect of a project, and in many buildings of the period several firms collaborated, or different firms worked on separate rooms, particularly in the mansions of the very wealthy.

The "Aesthetic Movement" of the 1870s-80s, popularized in the United States by the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia in 1876, stressed the "aesthetic" or artistic in the applied arts, and reached its culmination in the design of interior decoration. The preface to *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement* gives an indication of the general interior design intent, characterized by a visual complexity and profusion of "surface ornament":

The layering and juxtaposition of many different patterns and the use of a subtle palette of colors closely related in value, hue, and tone demonstrated a heightened artistic consciousness on the part of the

*decorator and at the same time demanded a refined sensibility on the part of the visitor. Each object or detail deserved close attention, yet, like a mosaic, the whole became unified when seen from a distance.*³⁶

The Aesthetic Movement embraced many different historic styles, such as the Queen Anne, "Modern Gothic," neo-Classical, Colonial Revival, and Renaissance Revival, as well as the Japanesque, Moorish and other exotic motifs.

As an ensemble, the regimental and company rooms of the Seventh Regiment Armory are a nationally important collection of high-style interiors, designed to reflect the late-Victorian taste of the late 1870s and early 1880s, with decorative sensibilities of the Aesthetic Movement, and woodwork mostly in the Renaissance Revival style. Designed and executed by some of America's (and New York's) most important design and interior decoration firms, the interiors of the Armory are on a scale with and display an elegance and quality usually found only in the interiors of private clubs and the most ornate residences, few of which survive in New York City from this period. These rooms contain an abundance of woodwork and cabinetry, particularly the company rooms, and as a whole they exhibit an unusual degree of intactness, despite their usage by the national guard and the exigencies for changes. The alterations to these rooms made during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries exhibit either change in contemporary taste or the skillful adaptation to existing decor. These rooms with the corridors and Stair Hall also contain a large and important collection of both original gas and early electric chandeliers and other lighting fixtures. Together with the Drill Room, highly significant for its engineering, the interiors of the Seventh Regiment Armory represent the height of American interior design within a single building, for a "single" (in this case military) client, during a period of fifty years.

The serious study and appreciation of American late nineteenth-century decorative arts is a relatively recent development. The Seventh Regiment Armory interiors, other than the Veterans' Room and Library, are not widely known. Nonetheless, a number of scholars and experts in the fields of American architectural history and decorative arts have assigned a signal role to these surviving interiors. In 1983, Richard H. Howland, then Special Assistant to the Secretary, Smithsonian Institution, and President of the Victorian Society in America, stated that

*the majestic hallways and the . . . grand rooms facing Park Avenue on the two principal floors of the Armory constitute the most significant group of authentic 1882/3 [sic] interiors in America today.*³⁷

The Landmarks Preservation Commission received testimony on the Armory's interiors from a number of specialists in 1992. Catherine Hoover Voorsanger, Assistant Curator, American Decorative Arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, said that the interiors

are now rare examples—even in their less than complete state—of the work of the best cabinetmakers and designers of the late nineteenth century: Associated Artists, Herter Brothers, Alexander Roux, and Pottier and Stymus, just to name a few. We have so little left of our rich nineteenth-century architectural and decorative arts heritage.

Marilynn Johnson, former Associate Curator, American Wing, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, remarked that "the Seventh Regiment Armory contains the most important 1870s and 1880s interiors remaining in New York City." Kevin Stayton, Curator, Department of Decorative Art, The Brooklyn Museum, stated

Representing as they do a cross section of the work of the most important design firms of the late nineteenth century, the rooms are the single most important collection of nineteenth-century interiors to survive intact in one building. The rooms include several that have long been recognized as aesthetic masterworks, unsurpassed by other surviving examples, and as an ensemble, they provide a resource that is a treasure trove yet to be fully explored. . . . The rooms already form a large and critical part of the foundation of our understanding of the art of this era.

Dianne H. Pilgrim, Director, and David R. McFadden, Curator of Decorative Arts, Cooper-Hewitt Museum, wrote that

The significance of these interiors cannot be underestimated. The roster of artists, designers, and firms that contributed to the interior embellishment of these spaces reads like a textbook of the history of design in

America between 1880 and 1930. . . . It is important that the entire sequence of rooms, from the earliest revival style interiors to those of the [1930s], be preserved for future study.

Robert J. Kapsch, Chief, Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record, cited the interiors as

An important aspect of the national significance of the building. . . which the National Historic Landmark nomination terms 'the most significant group of 1880s high-style interiors and furniture outside of a museum.' The Drill Room is spectacular. . . . The finish details of the administration building rooms are likewise breathtaking . .

Mosette G. Broderick, Adjunct Assistant Professor/Assistant Chair, Department of Fine Arts, New York University, called the armory rooms

the finest and only set of rooms by the major decorative arts specialists of the 1880's to survive in New York City . . . [and the] only remaining example of the cooperative and rival efforts of the best decorators of this period working together in one complex. . . a showcase of the aesthetics and workmanship of the first major period of independent interior design in America.

Frank G. Matero, Associate Professor and Director, Architectural Conservation Laboratory, University of Pennsylvania, wrote that

the tremendous significance of the Armory's interiors comes from their largely unchanged decorative finishes: the painting, carved and milled woodwork, mosaics, ornamental metalwork and plasterwork, and stained glass. Few, if any, late nineteenth century interiors possess the quantity or caliber of

the Armory's spaces and none display the same degree of survival.

And Nina Gray, former Decorative Arts Curator, The New-York Historical Society, said

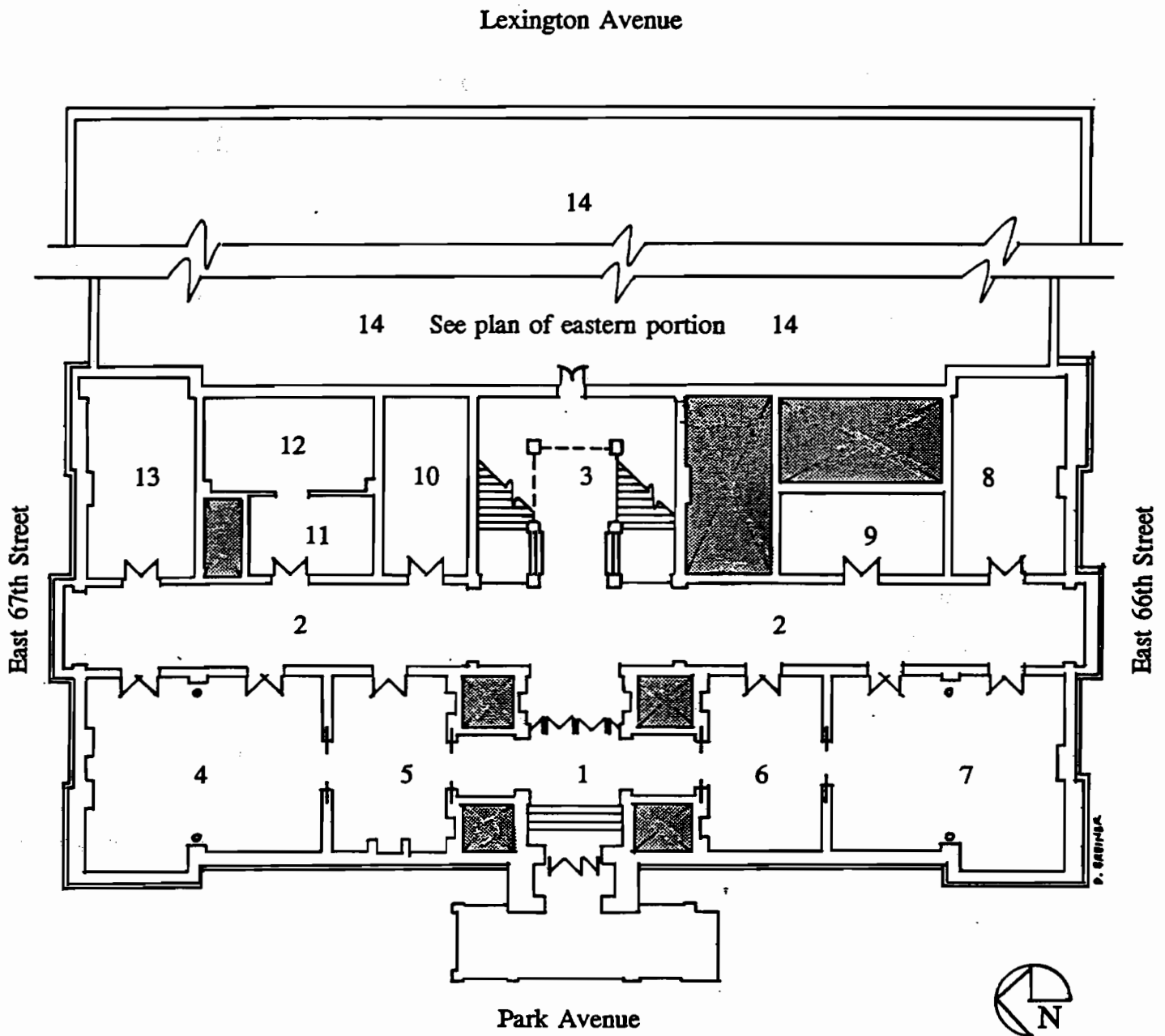
This amazing group of talent came together to decorate the various rooms of the Armory, each one interpreting the Renaissance Revival style in a different yet harmonious manner. The rooms at the Armory represent the only surviving public interiors in New York from this extraordinarily creative period in interior decoration. The palatial dimensions and grandeur of the public rooms are complemented by the more intimate scale of the company rooms, each one decorated for the pleasure and pride of a different company.

Report prepared by
Jay Shockley,
Deputy Director of Research

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NOTES

1. An earlier use of the term was sometimes interchangeable with "arsenal," a building in which arms are manufactured or stored. The Arsenal in Central Park (1847-51), built by New York State, is a designated New York City Landmark.
2. *Report to Council of Officers - Seventh Regiment, National Guard* (NY: Edward O. Jenkins, 1858), 12 (Aug. 10, 1855).
3. *Minutes, Council of Officers* (May 1, 1874).
4. *Ibid.*, Jan. 15, 1876.
5. Cited in: Charles E. Lydecker, "The Armory Building," *SRG* (Jan. 1911), 64.
6. Financial figures were obtained from *New Armory Fund, Receipts and Disbursements* and Clark, p. 301.
7. Clark, p. 299.
8. "The Armory as a Club House," *SRG* (Feb. 1890), 43.
9. "The Seventh's New Home," *NYT*, Apr. 10, 1880.
10. Col. Emmons Clark, *Letterbook 1875-80*, (Aug. 28, 1879).
11. *Minutes, Council of Officers* (Oct. 4, 1879).
12. *Ibid.*, Nov. 1, 1879.
13. *Ibid.*, Jan. 3, 1880.
14. Clark, *Letterbook*, Mar. 19, 1879.
15. *Ibid.*, Apr. 14, 1879.
16. *Ibid.*, Aug. 25, 1879.
17. Clark, p. 285.
18. Clark, p. 301.
19. Clark, p. 297.
20. "The Seventh's New Home."
21. "A Gorgeous Armory," *Boston Press*, Nov. 11, 1880.
22. "Pro Patria et Gloria," *NY Herald*, Sept. 25, 1880.
23. *Minutes, Trustees of the Seventh Regiment Armory Building 1893-1909* (Jan. 4, 1896).
24. *The Armory Board 1884-1911*, p. 15.
25. *Minutes, Trustees*, July 19, 1897.
26. *SRG* (Aug. 1897), 196.
27. Col. Daniel Appleton, *Letterbook 1897-98* (Sept. 18, 1897).
28. *SRG* (Jan. 1898), 42.
29. *SRG* (Nov. 1897), 237.
30. *Minutes, Trustees*, Jan. 2, 1901.
31. "New System for Heating Armory," *SRG* (Nov. 1902), 24.
32. "The 'New' Armory," *SRG* (Dec. 1909), 58.
33. "The Seventh's 'New' Home," *SRG* (Dec. 1909), 43.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *SRG* (Nov. 1894), 183.
36. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *In Pursuit of Beauty: Americans and the Aesthetic Movement*, p. 19.
37. American Society of Interior Designers, *Great New York Interiors: Seventh Regiment Armory* (1983), 5.



FIRST FLOOR INTERIOR (western portion)

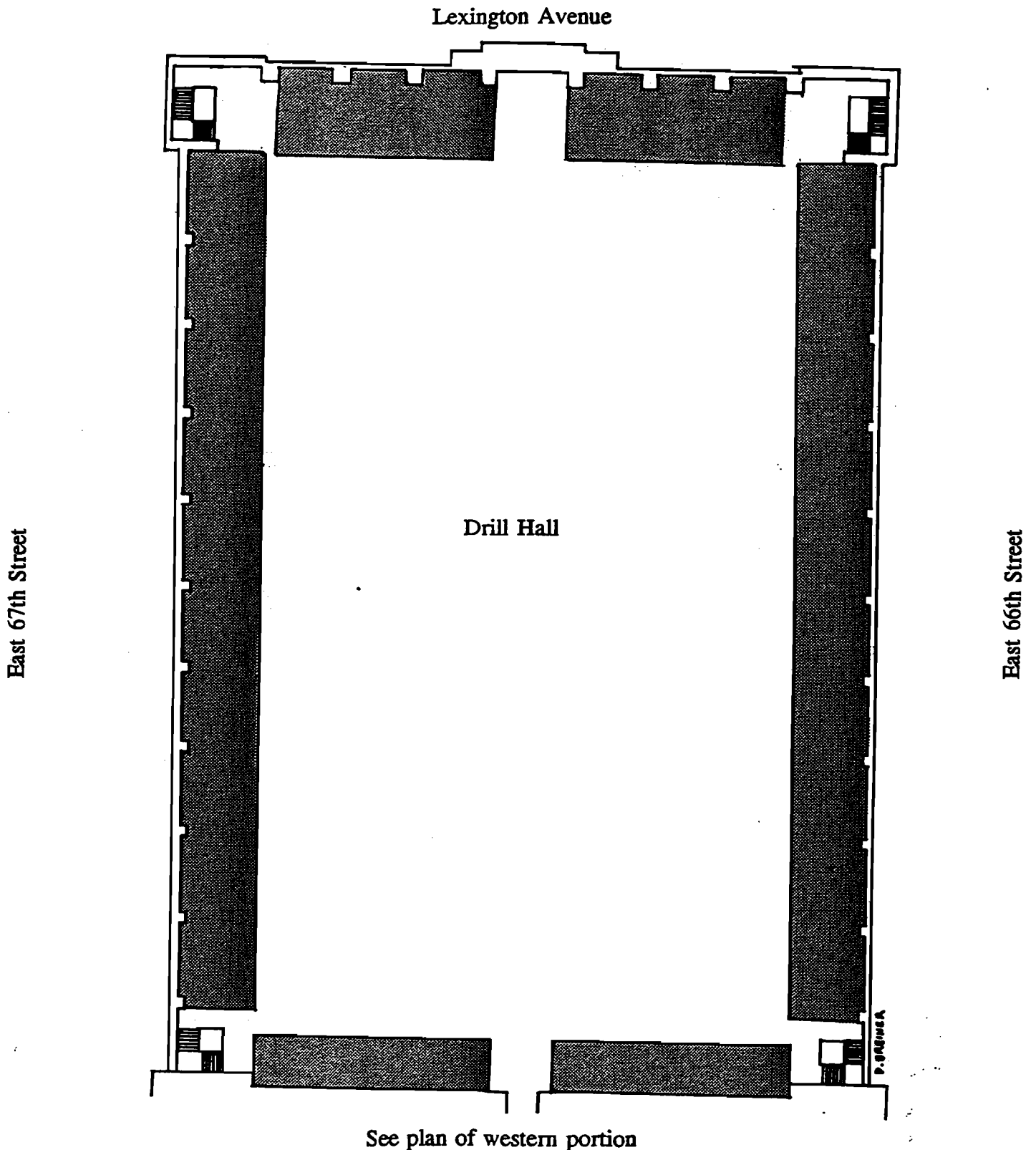
- | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Entrance Hall | 8 Colonel's Room |
| 2 Main Corridor | 9 Adjutant's Room |
| 3 Stair Hall & Staircase | 10 Equipment Room |
| 4 Veterans' Room | 11 Outer Committee Room |
| 5 Library | 12 Inner Committee Room |
| 6 Reception Room | 13 Field & Staff Room |
| 7 Board of Officers Room | 14 Drill Room |

 Interior spaces not designated


SEVENTH REGIMENT ARMORY INTERIOR

Designated July 19, 1994

Landmarks Preservation Commission



FIRST FLOOR INTERIOR (eastern portion)

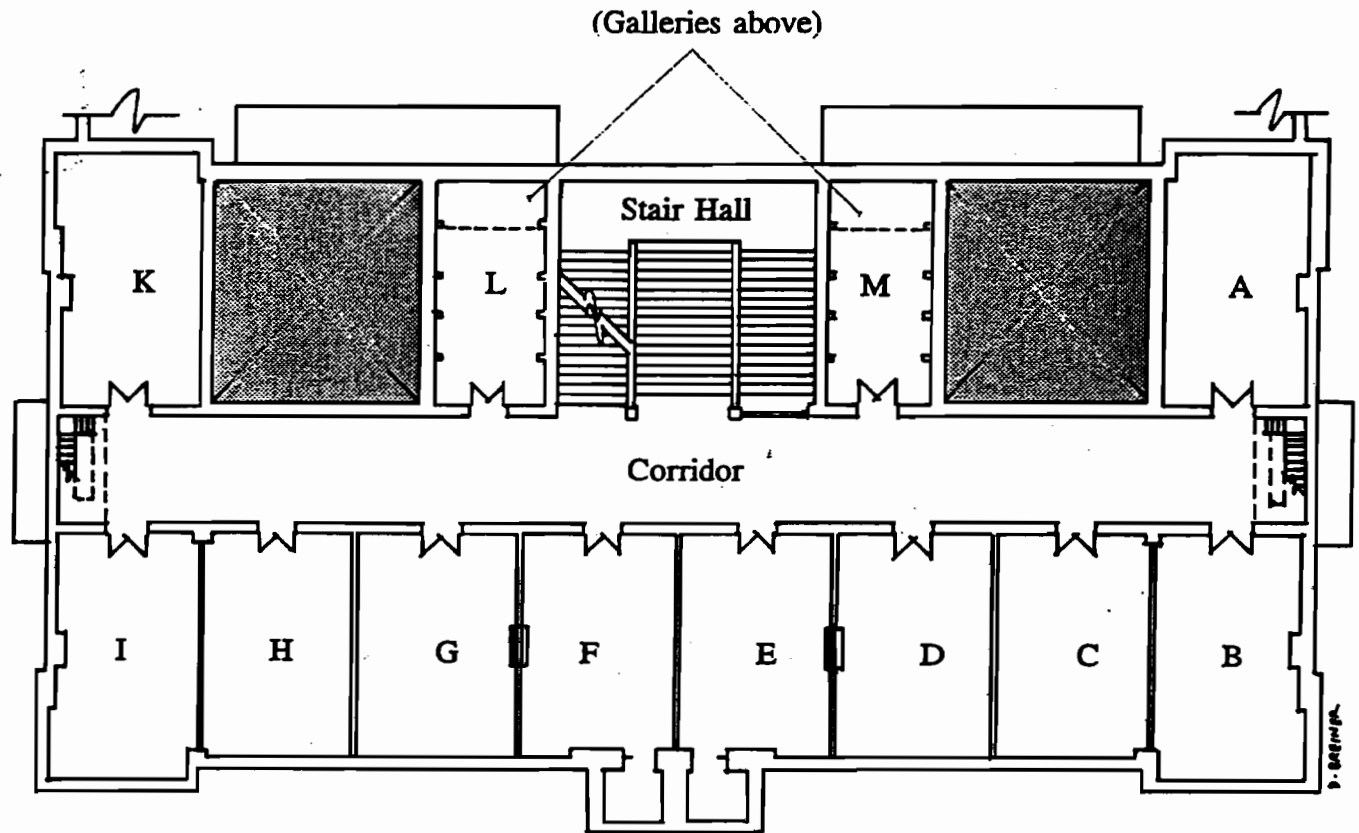
 Interior spaces not designated



SEVENTH REGIMENT ARMORY INTERIOR


Designated July 19, 1994

Landmarks Preservation Commission



SECOND FLOOR INTERIOR

A = Company A (First Company) Room
B = Company B (Second Company) Room, etc.

 Interior spaces not designated

SEVENTH REGIMENT ARMORY INTERIOR

Designated July 19, 1994

Landmarks Preservation Commission

1-3. ENTRANCE HALL, STAIR HALL, and FIRST and SECOND FLOOR CORRIDORS

Architect: Charles W. Clinton, 1879

Interior Decoration Firm: George C. Flint & Co., 1879-80

Lighting Fixtures: Mitchell, Vance & Co., 1879-81 (newel torchieres only); Frank S. Brady / J.L. Gaumer & Co., Phila., 1897

Style: Renaissance Revival

Contracts for the completion of the general interior fittings of the armory, including the massive entrance hall, corridors, and main staircase, were let in August 1879; according to the records of disbursements of the New Armory Fund, payments on woodwork continued through August 1880, and on gas fixtures through the following March. George C. Flint & Co. was responsible for the oak woodwork (a \$19,780 contract), including the doors and the casing of the iron staircase (H.C. Glinsmann was in charge of the work, as cited in the *New York Times*, April 1880), while Mitchell, Vance & Co. provided the gas lighting fixtures (which were brass with a bronze tone, and only two of which are extant in these spaces) for \$8822. Col. Emmons Clark commented that "the grand stairway is the feature of the interior... the woodwork of the halls is massive oak, and the design is dignified and severe, corresponding with the external features of the building." Flanking the entrance are bronze tablets (1880, Mitchell, Vance & Co.) commemorating the construction of the armory; over the years other memorials have been placed in the halls. During the electrification of the armory in 1897 the gas fixtures here were replaced (except for the staircase newel torchieres, which received "a new dress of real bronze"). The armory's new fixtures, constituting "one of the largest individual jobs ever given out in the city" (120 chandeliers and 230 wall bracket fixtures, for about \$25,000) according to the *Seventh Regiment Gazette*, were designed by Frank S. Brady, who acted as general superintendent of the work and supervised their manufacture by J.L. Gaumer & Co., of Philadelphia. Reminiscent of the work of the Associated Artists in the Veterans' Room and Library, the corridor chandeliers and wall bracket fixtures are of wrought-iron "finished dead black"; these fixtures represent a major and extraordinary component within the armory's fine collection. As part of the additions and alterations made to the armory in 1909-11, staircases were built at either end of the second floor corridor, and a set of glass doors was installed in the entrance hall (later moved). In 1913 the first floor corridor received a pressed metal ceiling.

Descriptive List of Significant Features

ENTRANCE HALL

oak woodwork, including:

high triple entrance doors (with transom)

door surrounds with double sliding doors (with transoms) to Library and Reception Room

window surrounds (with frosted glass) of 4 small rooms

wainscot

floor

stairs with wrought-iron and brass railings

2 bronze tablets (1880, Mitchell, Vance & Co.) by entrance (south: lists architect, consulting architect and engineer, and building committee; north: states building erected 1877-80 under Col. Emmons Clark)

1 wrought-iron chandelier and 6 wrought-iron wall bracket light fixtures (1897)

metal and glass doors with large transom (1909; moved post-1955 from head of entrance stairs)

pressed metal ceiling (1913)

- 2 wood and perforated metal radiator cabinets (c. 1931)
- 4 hanging light fixtures (c. 1942)
- 3 memorial tablets (Brig. Gen. Louis Fitzgerald (d. 1908); Conversion of 107th Infantry (Rifle) NYNG to 207th Coast Artillery (AA) Mobile, 1940; and Simon Bolivar (1939)).

FIRST FLOOR CORRIDOR

oak woodwork, including:

wainscot

door surrounds with double sliding doors (and transoms) (surmounted by wood flag holders and, on the east wall, oculi (1909-11)) leading to regimental rooms

2 door surrounds to small rooms east of Entrance Hall

2 window surrounds each end floor

3 wrought-iron folding gates [1896]

5 wrought-iron chandeliers and 9 wrought-iron wall bracket light fixtures (1897)

2 cast-iron radiators with marble tops (Baker, Smith & Co., 1909)

pressed metal ceiling with cove (1913)

elevator door and bronze sign [c. 1928-29]

north end leaded stained-glass window screen (memorial to Medal of Honor winners, 1969)

south end platform

5 tablets (Knickerbocker Greys WWI and WWII, Tennis Club, Maj. Richard Irwin (d. 1973), and National Historic Landmark), and small misc. memorial and flag plaques on surrounds and wainscot

STAIR HALL

stairs (from basement to third floor) encased in oak paneling with pendants, wainscot, and balustrade (treads replaced 1953)

First Floor

2 colossal columns and corner piers (originally painted like woodwork) and 2 smaller columns before entry to Drill Room

large double doors and transom [now covered] leading to Drill Room

2 windows each on north and south walls (covered, with sculpture shelves at bases, post-1955)

2 bronzed brass newel torchieres (1880, Mitchell, Vance & Co., with later globes)

miniature U.S.S. *New York* bell and scroll metalwork screen (1895, Clinton & Russell)

wrought-iron gates at bottom of stairs [1896]

2 wrought-iron wall bracket light fixtures and 1 bronze ball-and-chain chandelier (1897)

1 south wall door surround (1909-11)

2 cast-iron radiators with marble tops (Baker, Smith & Co., 1909; north one moved, 1942)

3 north wall memorial tablets (Co. C Civil War, marble; Civil War, marble [1911]; Master Sgt. Max Welker (d. 1954), bronze)

3 south wall memorial tablets (Co. H Civil War, marble; Mexican Border 1916, marble and bronze; Lt. Col. Nicholas Engel, 1938, marble and bronze)

telephone booths and wainscot of north stairs to basement (1942)

First Mezzanine Landing

2 large columns

door surround with double sliding doors (and transom) to Drill Room gallery

2 wall light fixtures of shield design (1897)

north and south door surrounds with double doors (1909-11)
marble Civil War memorial tablet on south wall

Second Floor

2 colossal columns and corner piers
2 small window surrounds south and 1 north

Second Mezzanine Landing

door surround with double sliding doors (and transom) to Drill Room gallery
2 wall light fixtures of shield design (1897)
colossal, affixed Col. Daniel Appleton equestrian portrait (1905, Richard Creifelds) north wall

Third Floor

beamed ceiling
chandelier [1897?]
balustrade
[a recent partition wall and door close off the Stair Hall, behind the balustrade]

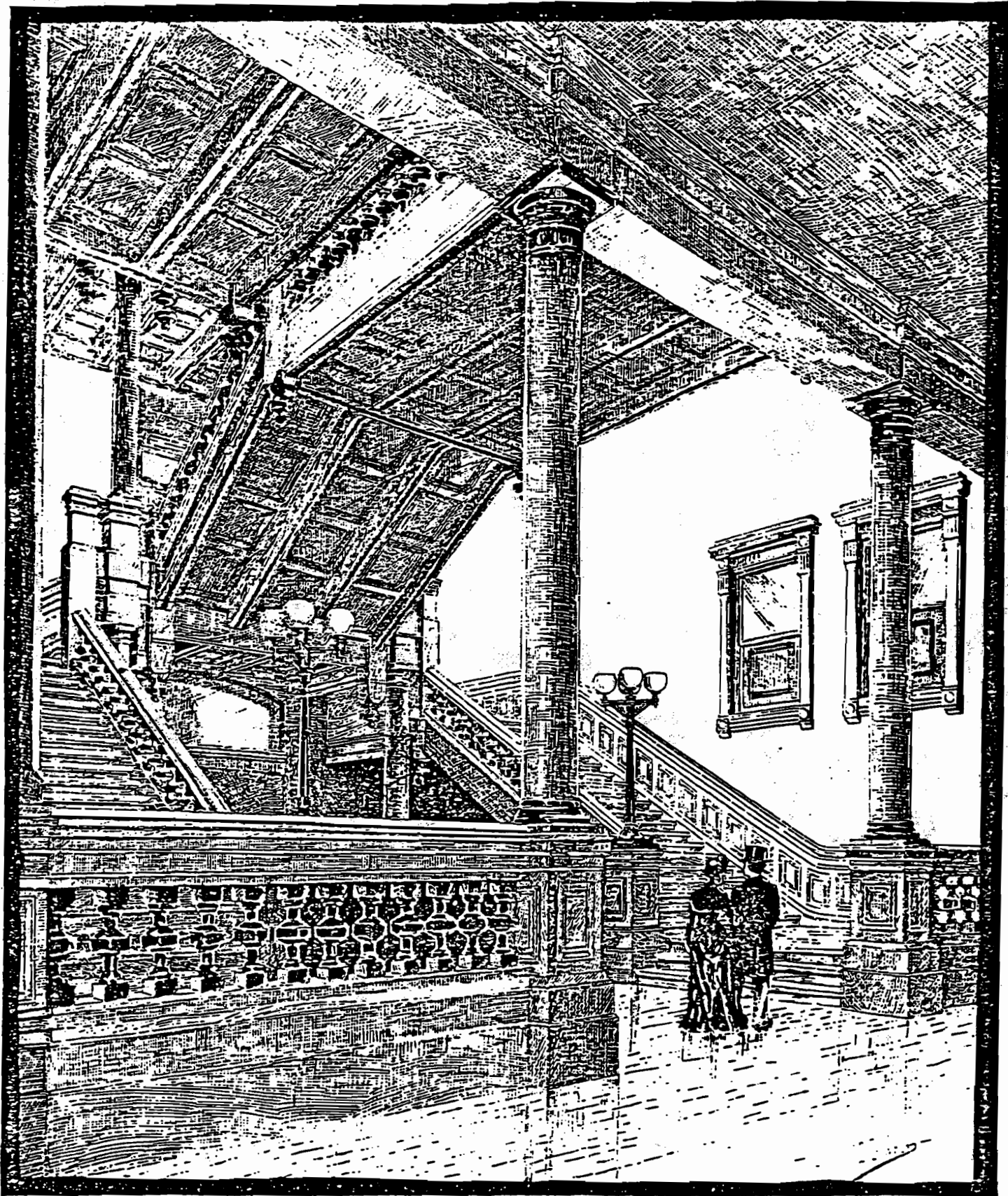
SECOND FLOOR CORRIDOR

oak woodwork, including:
wainscot
door surrounds with double doors (and transoms) (surmounted by flag holders, and oculi (1909-11)
in each center room on the east side of the hall) leading to Company Rooms
2 large window surrounds each end, and smaller upper window surrounds
display cabinet with glass doors

plaster ceiling with molded cornice
3 wrought-iron chandeliers and 7 wrought-iron wall bracket light fixtures (1897)
iron stairways, with mezzanine levels, to third floor, at north and south ends (1909-11)
elevator door and bronze sign [c. 1928-29]
oak floor (c. 1931)
wood and metal radiator bench at north end
telephone booths nwc and swc (c. 1942)

References

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Stair Hall

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